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Chim

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(54) **GAMING METHOD AND A GAMING SYSTEM**

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G07F 17/32	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***G07F 17/3293*** (2013.01); ***G07F 17/3258*** (2013.01)

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USPC 463/11–13; 273/292

See application file for complete search history.

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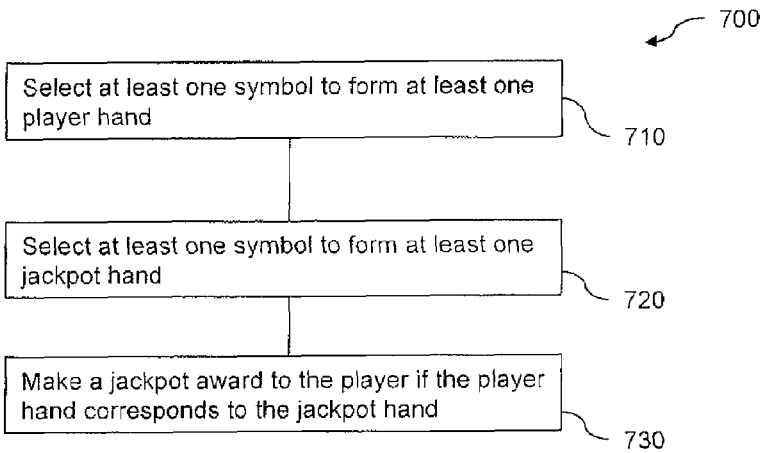
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The invention provides a method of gaming and a game controller and gaming system for implementing the method. The method includes selecting at least one symbol to form at least one player hand comprised of a plurality of symbols, selecting at least one symbol to form a jackpot hand comprised of a plurality of symbols, and making a jackpot award to the player if the player hand corresponds to the jackpot hand.

31 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



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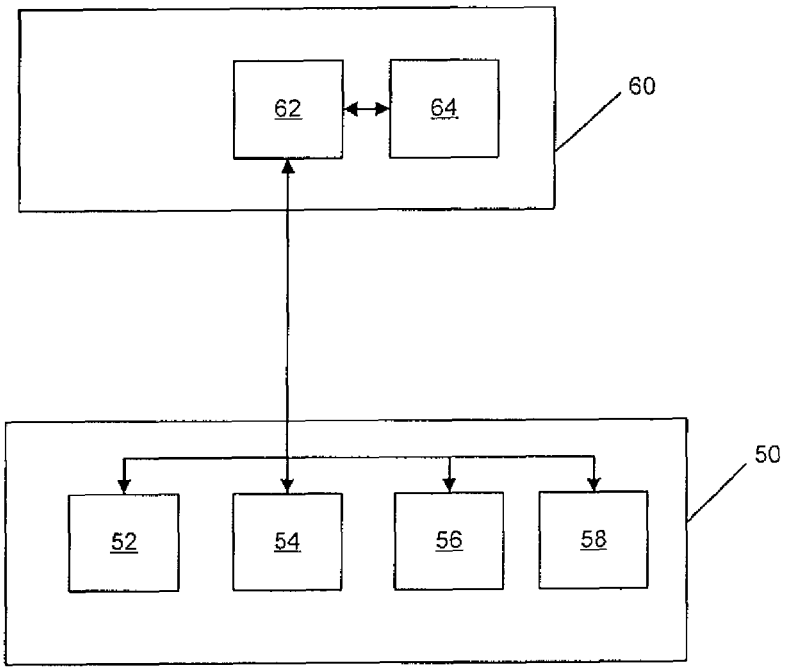

Figure 1

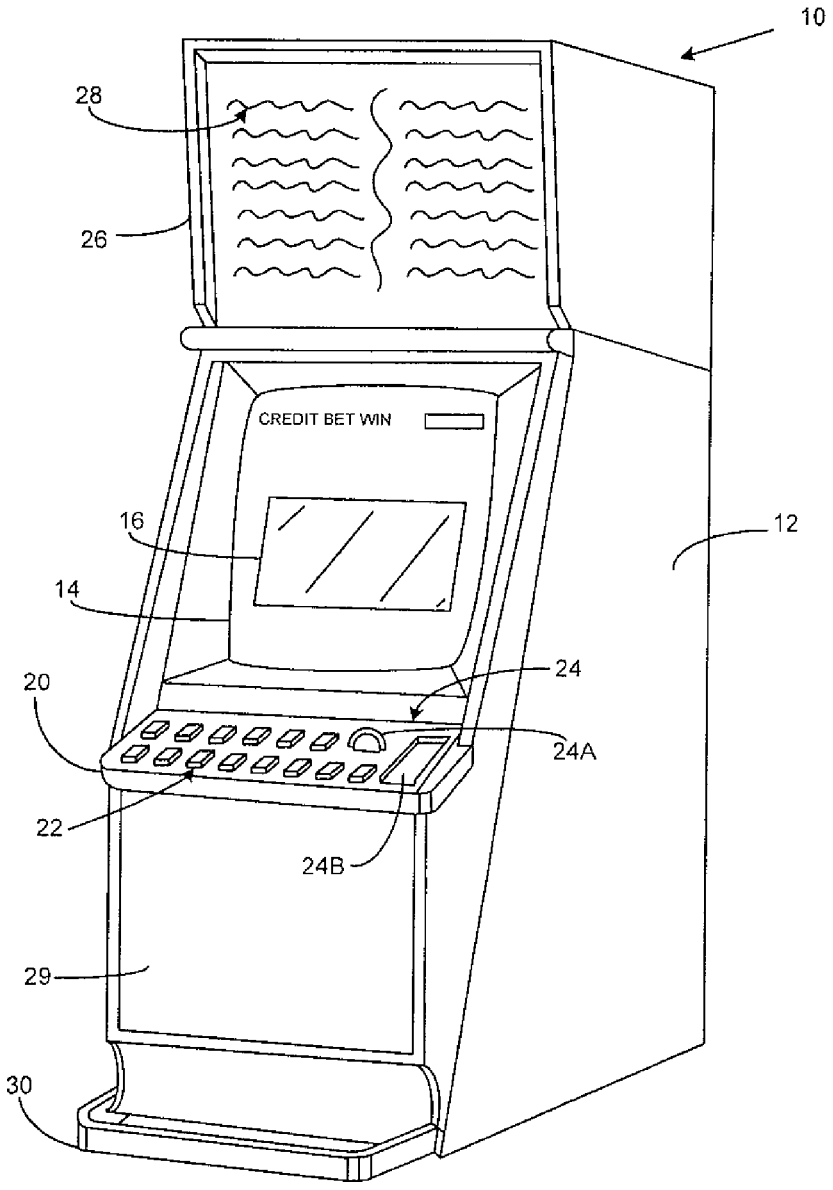

Figure 2

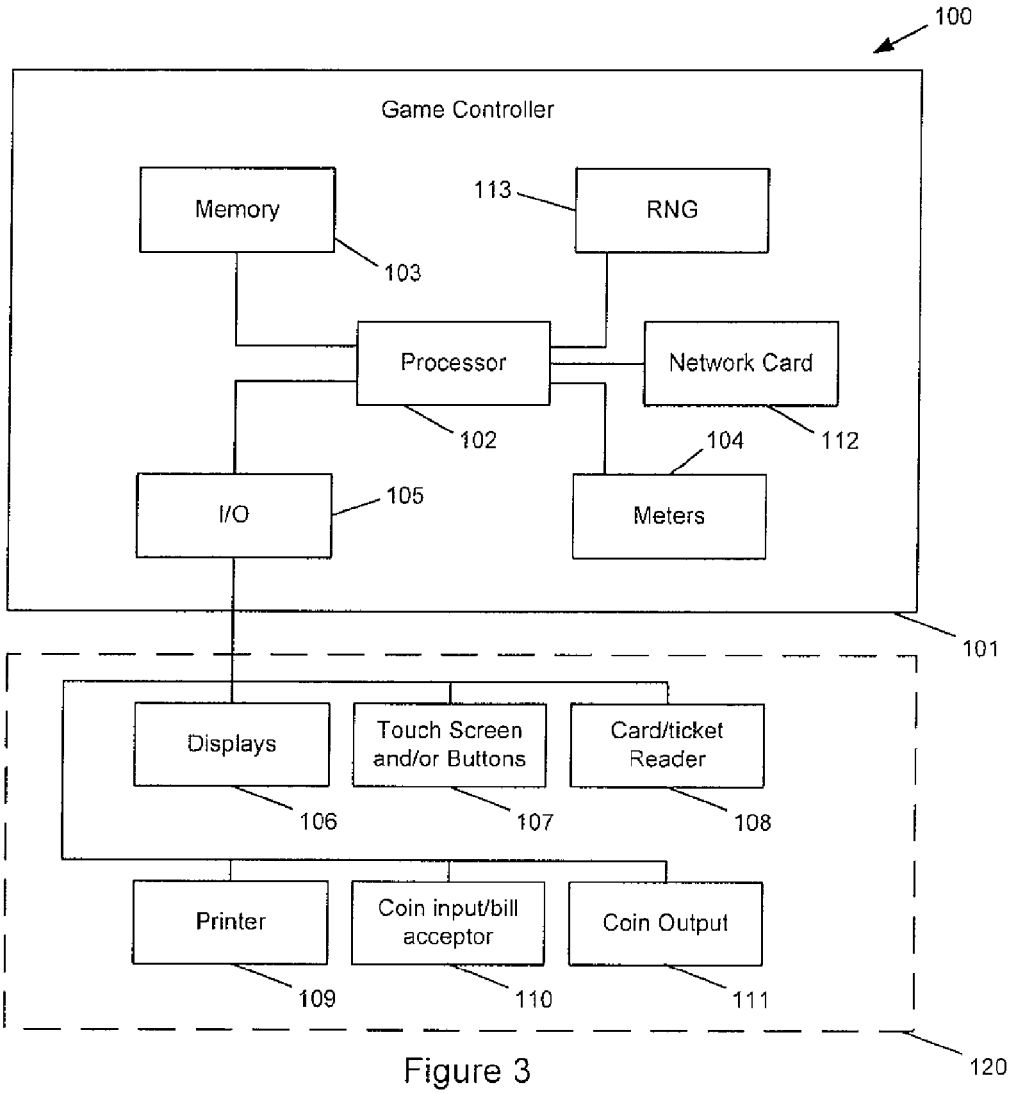

Figure 3

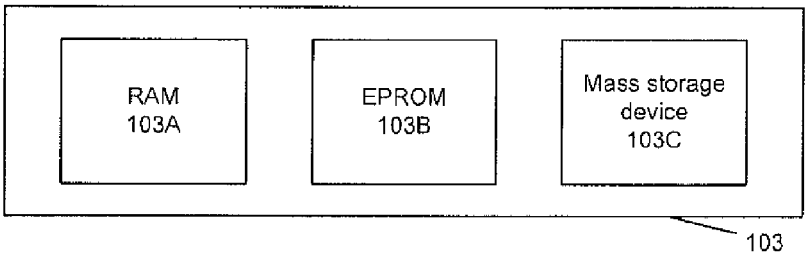

Figure 4

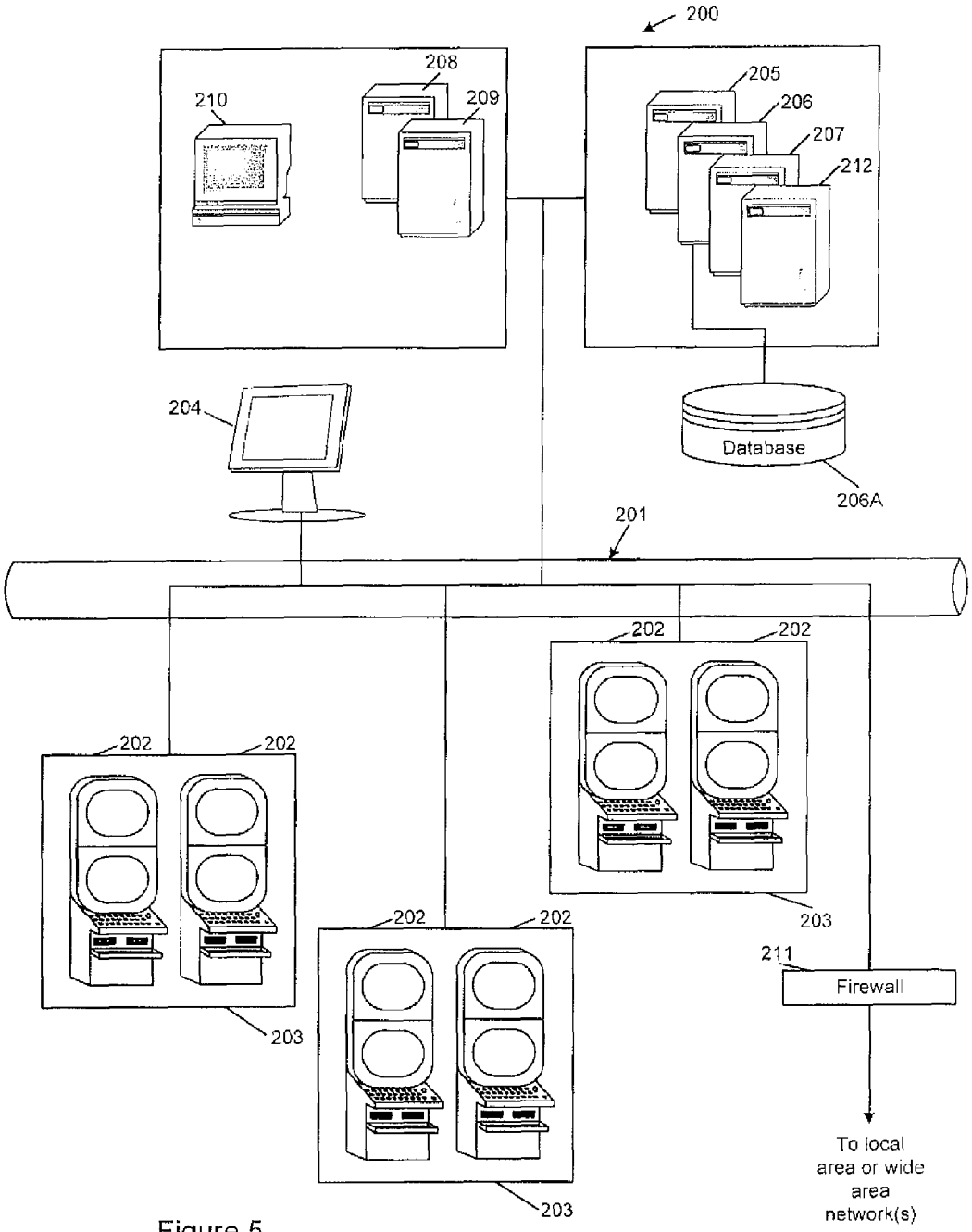
200
208
210
209
205
206
207
212
204
Database
206A
201
202
202
202
202
202
202
203
203
211
Firewall
To local area or wide area network(s)

Figure 5

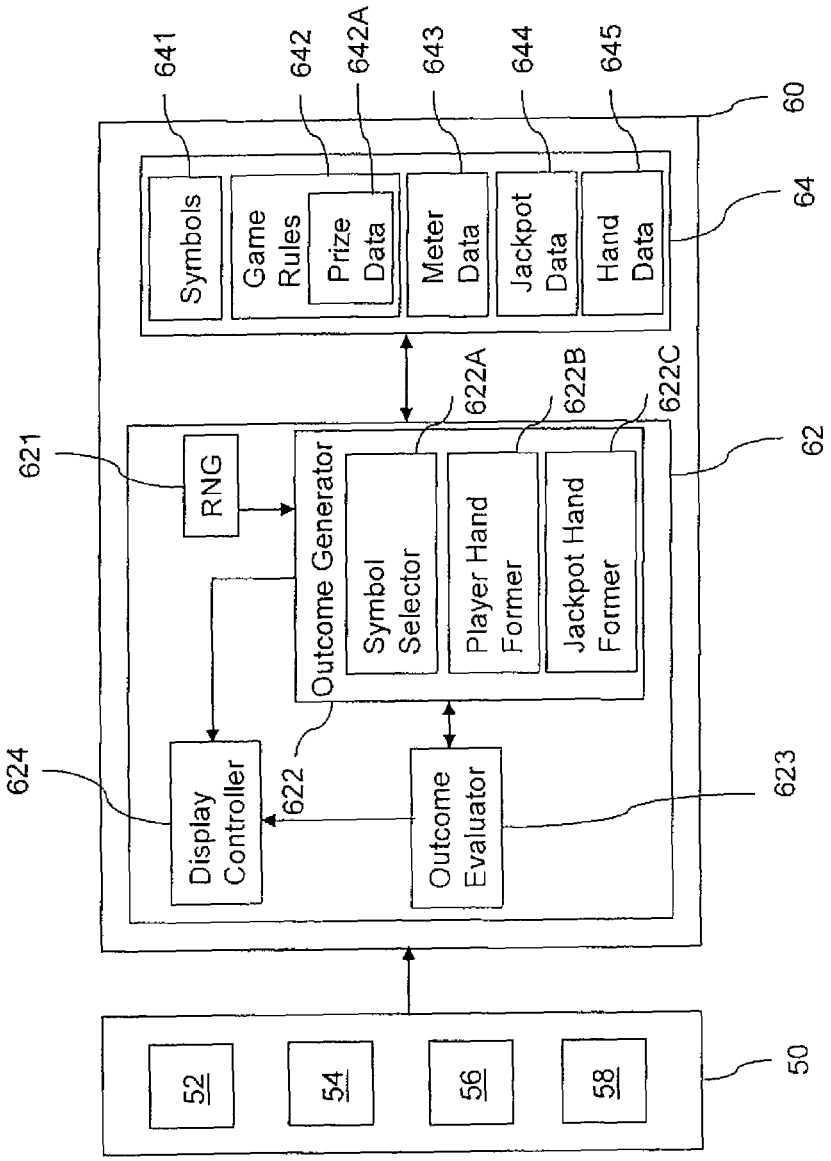
641
642
642A
643
644
645
60
Symbols
Game Rules
Prize Data
Meter Data
Jackpot Data
Hand Data
64
622A
622B
622C
621
RNG
Outcome Generator
Symbol Selector
Player Hand Former
Jackpot Hand Former
62
624
Display Controller
622
Outcome Evaluator
623
52
54
56
58
50

Figure 6

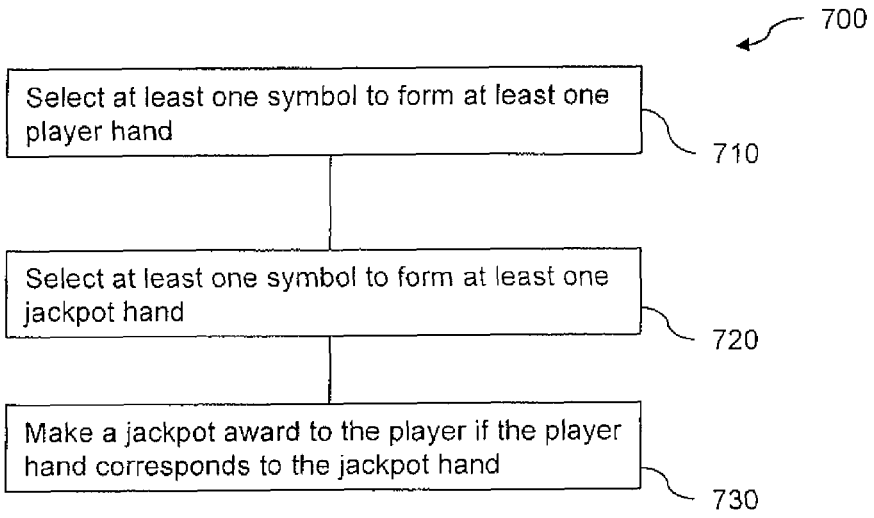
700
Select at least one symbol to form at least one player hand
710
Select at least one symbol to form at least one jackpot hand
720
Make a jackpot award to the player if the player hand corresponds to the jackpot hand
730

Figure 7

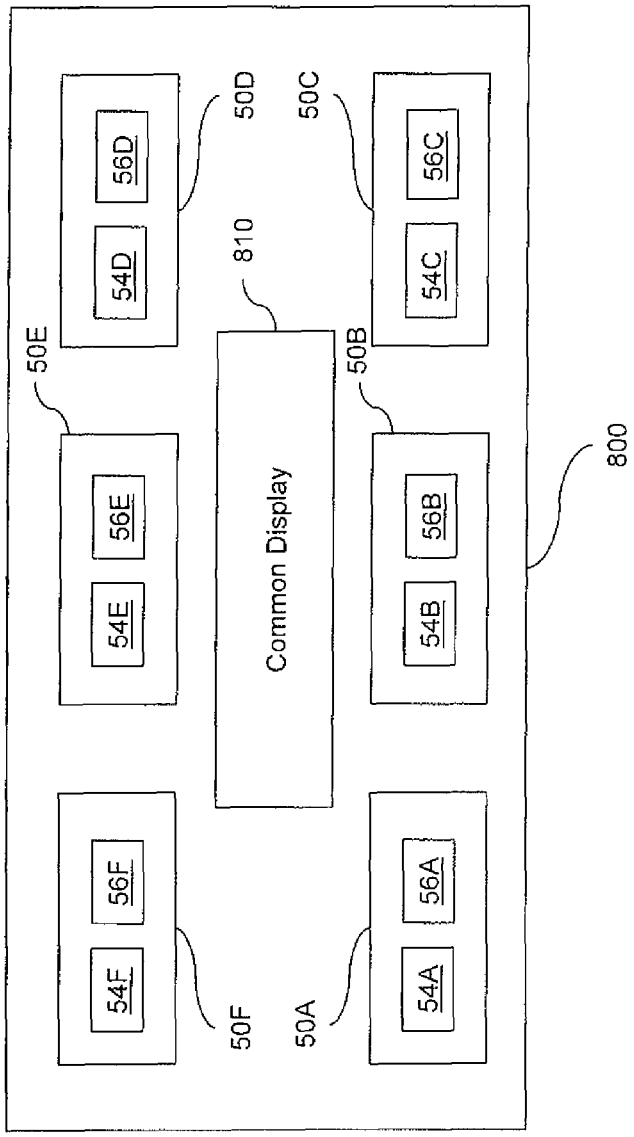
800
50A
50B
50C
50D
50E
50F
810
Common Display
54A
56A
54B
56B
54C
56C
54D
56D
54E
56E
54F
56F

Figure 8

GAMING METHOD AND A GAMING SYSTEM

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application claims the benefit of priority to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/468,518, filed on May 19, 2009, which claims priority to Australian Provisional Patent Application No. 2008902585, filed on May 23, 2008, entitled "A GAMING METHOD AND A GAMING SYSTEM", each of which is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety.

FIELD

The present invention relates to a method of gaming and a gaming system.

BACKGROUND

Current gaming systems allow a player to place a wager or bet, in return for which a game round of a game is conducted. Many gaming systems implement a jackpot award as an additional feature to the game round played so that the player can be awarded a jackpot based on the result of the game round.

While such gaming systems provide users with enjoyment, a need exists for alternative gaming systems in order to maintain or increase player enjoyment.

SUMMARY

In a first aspect, the invention provides a method of gaming including:

selecting at least one symbol to form at least one player hand including a plurality of symbols;

selecting at least one symbol to form a jackpot hand including a plurality of symbols; and

making a jackpot award to the player if the player hand corresponds to the jackpot hand.

In an embodiment, the jackpot hand is unique to the or each player hand.

In an embodiment, the symbols correspond to cards in a game round of poker and the symbols include playing card symbols.

In an embodiment, the playing card symbols forming the player hand are selected from one set of 52 playing card symbols and the symbols forming the jackpot hand are selected from another set of the same 52 playing card symbols.

In an embodiment, five cards form the player and jackpot hands.

In an embodiment, the method includes:

conducting the game round of poker in response to the player placing a wager; and

conducting a jackpot game in response to the player placing a jackpot wager, the jackpot game including making the jackpot award to the player if the player hand corresponds to the jackpot hand.

In an embodiment, the method includes:

conducting the game round of poker in response to the player placing a wager; and

conducting a jackpot game in response to a percentage of the game round wager, the jackpot game including making the jackpot award to the player if the player hand corresponds to the jackpot hand.

In an embodiment, the game round of poker includes:

selecting two cards to be player hole cards;

selecting five cards to be community cards; and

forming the player hand by combining at least one hole card and a number of community cards.

In an embodiment, a larger portion of the jackpot award is made to the player hand corresponding to the jackpot hand formed with two hole cards than to the player hand corresponding to the jackpot hand formed with one hole card.

In an embodiment, the jackpot wager and a percentage of the game round wager contribute to a progressive jackpot.

In an embodiment, the method includes conducting a decider round to make the jackpot award to one player if more than one player hand corresponds to the jackpot hand.

In a second aspect, the invention provides a game controller including:

a symbol selector arranged to:

select at least one symbol to form at least one player hand including a plurality of symbols; and

select at least one symbol to form a jackpot hand including a plurality of symbols; and

an outcome evaluator arranged to determine whether to make a jackpot award to the player if the player hand corresponds to the jackpot hand.

In an embodiment, the symbol selector is further arranged to select symbols to be displayed in a set of display positions to the player.

In a third aspect, the invention provides a gaming system including:

a display arranged to display a plurality of symbols in a set of display positions to a player;

a symbol selector arranged to:

select at least one symbol to form at least one player hand including a plurality of symbols; and

select at least one symbol to form a jackpot hand including a plurality of symbols; and

an outcome evaluator arranged to determine whether to make a jackpot award to the player if the player hand corresponds to the jackpot hand.

In an embodiment, the gaming system includes a credit mechanism operable by the player to place a wager to be bet in the game round of poker and a wager to be bet in a jackpot game.

In a fourth aspect, the invention provides a gaming system including:

a means for selecting at least one symbol to form at least one player hand including a plurality of symbols for each gaming device;

a means for selecting at least one symbol to form a jackpot hand including a plurality of symbols; and

a means for making a jackpot award to the player if the player hand corresponds to the jackpot hand.

In a fifth aspect, the invention provides a gaming system including:

at least one player interfaces each including a game play mechanism mounted to a cabinet and a display mounted within the cabinet, and a game controller disposed within the cabinet including a processor and a memory storing game control instructions which enable the game controller to operate in response to operation of a respective at least one game play mechanism by a player, the game controller including:

a symbol selector arranged to select at least one symbol to form at least one player hand including a plurality of symbols and select at least one symbol to form a jackpot hand including a plurality of symbols; and

an outcome evaluator arranged to determine whether to make a jackpot award to the player if the respective player hand corresponds to the jackpot hand.

In a sixth aspect, the invention provides computer program code which when executed implements the above method.

In a seventh aspect, the invention provides a computer readable medium including the above program code.

In an eighth aspect, the invention provides a data signal including the above program code.

In a ninth aspect, the invention provides transmitting or receiving the program code.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

An exemplary embodiment of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. **1** is a block diagram of the core components of a gaming system;

FIG. **2** is a perspective view of a stand alone gaming machine;

FIG. **3** is a block diagram of the functional components of a gaming machine;

FIG. **4** is a schematic diagram of the functional components of a memory;

FIG. **5** is a schematic diagram of a network gaming system;

FIG. **6** is a further block diagram of a gaming system;

FIG. **7** is a flow chart of an embodiment; and

FIG. **8** is a block diagram of an embodiment.

Features, further aspects, and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description of embodiments thereof, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings. Also, various embodiments of the aspects described in the preceding paragraphs will be apparent from the appended claims, the following description and/or the accompanying drawings. It should be understood, however, that the present invention is not limited to the arrangements and instrumentality shown in the attached drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Although the following discloses example methods, systems, articles of manufacture, and apparatus including, among other components, software executed on hardware, it should be noted that such methods and apparatus are merely illustrative and should not be considered as limiting. For example, it is contemplated that any or all of these hardware and software components could be embodied exclusively in hardware, exclusively in software, exclusively in firmware, or in any combination of hardware, software, and/or firmware. Accordingly, while the following describes example methods, systems, articles of manufacture, and apparatus, the examples provided are not the only way to implement such methods, systems, articles of manufacture, and apparatus.

When any of the appended claims are read to cover a purely software and/or firmware implementation, at least one of the elements is hereby expressly defined to include a tangible medium such as a memory, DVD, CD, etc. storing the software and/or firmware.

Referring to the drawings, there is shown a method and gaming system having a game controller arranged to implement a game wherein a jackpot award is made to a player with a player hand corresponding to a jackpot hand.

General Construction of Gaming System

The gaming system can take a number of different forms. In a first form, a stand alone gaming machine is provided wherein all or most components implementing the game are present in a player operable gaming machine.

In a second form, a distributed architecture is provided wherein some of the components implementing the game are present in a player operable gaming machine and some of the components implementing the game are located remotely relative to the gaming machine. For example, a "thick client" architecture may be used wherein part of the game is executed on a player operable gaming machine and part of the game is executed remotely, such as by a gaming server; or a "thin client" architecture may be used wherein most of the game is executed remotely such as by a gaming server and a player operable gaming machine is used only to display audible and/or visible gaming information to the player and receive gaming inputs from the player.

However, it will be understood that other arrangements are envisaged. For example, an architecture may be provided wherein a gaming machine is networked to a gaming server and the respective functions of the gaming machine and the gaming server are selectively modifiable. For example, the gaming system may operate in stand alone gaming machine mode, "thick client" mode or "thin client" mode depending on the game being played, operating conditions, and so on. Other variations will be apparent to persons skilled in the art.

Irrespective of the form, the gaming system includes several core components. At the broadest level, the core components are a player interface **50** and a game controller **60** as illustrated in FIG. **1**. The player interface is arranged to enable manual interaction between a player and the gaming system and for this purpose includes the input/output components for the player to enter instructions and play the game and observe the game outcomes.

Components of the player interface may vary from embodiment to embodiment but will typically include a credit mechanism **52** to enable a player to input credits and receive payouts, one or more displays **54**, a game play mechanism **56** including one or more input devices that enable a player to input game play instructions (e.g. to place a wager), and one or more speakers **58**.

The game controller **60** is in data communication with the player interface and typically includes a processor **62** that processes the game play instructions in accordance with game play rules and outputs game play outcomes to the display. Typically, the game play instructions are stored as program code in a memory **64** but can also be hardwired. Herein the term "processor" is used to refer generically to any device that can process game play instructions in accordance with game play rules and may include: a microprocessor, microcontroller, programmable logic device or other computational device, a general purpose computer (e.g. a PC) or a server.

A gaming system in the form of a stand alone gaming machine **10** is illustrated in FIG. **2**. The gaming machine **10** includes a console **12** having a display **14** on which are displayed representations of a game **16** that can be played by a player. A mid-trim **20** of the gaming machine **10** houses a bank of buttons **22** for enabling a player to interact with the gaming machine, in particular during game play. The mid-trim **20** also houses a credit input mechanism **24** which in this example includes a coin input chute **24**A and a bill collector **24**B. Other credit input mechanisms may also be employed, for example, a card reader for reading a smart card, debit card or credit card. A player marketing module (not shown) having a reading device may also be provided

for the purpose of reading a player tracking device, for example as part of a loyalty program. The player tracking device may be in the form of a card, flash drive or any other portable storage medium capable of being read by the reading device.

A top box **26** may carry artwork **28**, including for example pay tables and details of bonus awards and other information or images relating to the game. Further artwork and/or information may be provided on a front panel **29** of the console **12**. A coin tray **30** is mounted beneath the front panel **29** for dispensing cash payouts from the gaming machine **10**.

The display **14** shown in FIG. **2** is in the form of a video display unit, particularly a cathode ray tube screen device. Alternatively, the display **14** may be a liquid crystal display, plasma screen, any other suitable video display unit, or the visible portion of an electromechanical device. The top box **26** may also include a display, for example a video display unit, which may be of the same type as the display **14**, or of a different type.

FIG. **3** shows a block diagram of operative components of a typical gaming machine which may be the same as or different to the gaming machine of FIG. **2**.

The gaming machine **100** includes a game controller **101** having a processor **102**. Instructions and data to control operation of the processor **102** are stored in a memory **103**, which is in data communication with the processor **102**. Typically, the gaming machine **100** will include both volatile and non-volatile memory and more than one of each type of memory, with such memories being collectively represented by the memory **103**.

The gaming machine has hardware meters **104** for purposes including ensuring regulatory compliance and monitoring player credit, an input/output (I/O) interface **105** for communicating with peripheral devices of the gaming machine **100**. The input/output interface **105** and/or the peripheral devices may be intelligent devices with their own memory for storing associated instructions and data for use with the input/output interface or the peripheral devices. A random number generator module **113** generates random numbers for use by the processor **102**. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the reference to random numbers includes pseudo-random numbers.

In the example shown in FIG. **3**, a player interface **120** includes peripheral devices that communicate with the game controller **101** include one or more displays **106**, a touch screen and/or buttons **107** (which provide a game play mechanism), a card and/or ticket reader **108**, a printer **109**, a bill acceptor and/or coin input mechanism **110** and a coin output mechanism **111**. Additional hardware may be included as part of the gaming machine **100**, or hardware may be omitted based on the specific implementation.

In addition, the gaming machine **100** may include a communications interface, for example a network card **112**. The network card may, for example, send status information, accounting information or other information to a central controller, server or database and receive data or commands from the central controller, server or database.

FIG. **4** shows a block diagram of the main components of an exemplary memory **103**. The memory **103** includes RAM **103**A, EPROM **103**B and a mass storage device **103**C. The RAM **103**A typically temporarily holds program files for execution by the processor **102** and related data. The EPROM **103**B may be a boot ROM device and/or may contain some system or game related code. The mass storage device **103**C is typically used to store game programs, the integrity of which may be verified and/or authenticated by the processor **102** using protected code from the EPROM **103**B or elsewhere.

It is also possible for the operative components of the gaming machine **100** to be distributed, for example input/output devices **106**,**107**,**108**,**109**,**110**,**111** to be provided remotely from the game controller **101**.

FIG. **5** shows a gaming system **200** in accordance with an alternative embodiment. The gaming system **200** includes a network **201**, which for example may be an Ethernet network. Gaming machines **202**, shown arranged in three banks **203** of two gaming machines **202** in FIG. **5**, are connected to the network **201**. The gaming machines **202** provide a player operable interface and may be the same as the gaming machines **10**,**100** shown in FIGS. **2** and **3**, or may have simplified functionality depending on the rules, guidelines, preferences, and/or requirements for implementing game play. While banks **203** of two gaming machines are illustrated in FIG. **5**, banks of one, three or more gaming machines are also envisaged.

One or more displays **204** may also be connected to the network **201**. For example, the displays **204** may be associated with one or more banks **203** of gaming machines. The displays **204** may be used to display representations associated with game play on the gaming machines **202**, and/or used to display other representations, for example promotional or informational material.

In a thick client embodiment, game server **205** implements part of the game played by a player using a gaming machine **202** and the gaming machine **202** implements part of the game. With this embodiment, as both the game server and the gaming device implement part of the game, they collectively provide a game controller. A database management server **206** may manage storage of game programs and associated data for downloading or access by the gaming devices **202** in a database **206**A. Typically, if the gaming system enables players to participate in a Jackpot game, a Jackpot server **207** will be provided to perform accounting functions for the Jackpot game. A loyalty program server **212** may also be provided.

In a thin client embodiment, game server **205** implements most or all of the game played by a player using a gaming machine **202** and the gaming machine **202** essentially provides only the player interface. With this embodiment, the game server **205** provides the game controller. The gaming machine will receive player instructions, pass these to the game server which will process them and return game play outcomes to the gaming machine for display. In a thin client embodiment, the gaming machines could be computer terminals, e.g. PCs running software that provides a player interface operable using standard computer input and output components.

Servers are also typically provided to assist in the administration of the gaming network **200**, including for example a gaming floor management server **208**, and a licensing server **209** to monitor the use of licenses relating to particular games. An administrator terminal **210** is provided to allow an administrator to run the network **201** and the devices connected to the network.

The gaming system **200** may communicate with other gaming systems, other local networks, for example a corporate network, and/or a wide area network such as the Internet, for example through a firewall **211**.

Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that in accordance with known techniques, functionality at the server side of the network may be distributed over a plurality of different computers. For example, elements may be run as a

single "engine" on one server or a separate server may be provided. For example, the game server **205** could run a random generator engine. Alternatively, a separate random number generator server could be provided. Further, persons skilled in the art will appreciate that a plurality of game servers could be provided to run different games or a single game server may run a plurality of different games based on the terminals.

Further Detail of Gaming System

Referring to FIG. **6**, the player operates the game play mechanism **56** to play a game implemented by the gaming system. In one embodiment, the game play mechanism **56** is operated to play a game round of the game. The game played includes a jackpot feature to provide increased levels of player enjoyment. The game may be implemented on a single player system or a multi-player system.

In one embodiment, display **54** displays to a player at least one unique symbol forming a player hand, which is formed from a plurality of symbols. That is, in some embodiments it is possible for there to be more than one of the same symbol forming all or part of the player hand. The display also displays at least one symbol forming a jackpot hand, which is also formed from a plurality of symbols. In an example of the gaming system, both the player and jackpot hands can be formed using repeated symbols. For example, if two sets of the same set of symbols are used to form a jackpot and a player hand, it is possible that the jackpot or player hand is formed with two identical symbols. In a further example of the gaming system, both the player and jackpot hands have a total of five symbols.

Exemplary embodiments of the present invention relate to gaming systems where the game is a game of poker and the symbols include playing card symbols. For example, in a game round of poker, the usual rules of poker are applied and there are 52 playing card symbols from which the player and jackpot hands are selected. In one embodiment, the player and jackpot hands are selected from two sets of the same 52 playing card symbols. Other embodiments are envisaged where, for example, multiple sets, or decks, of the 52 playing card symbols are used to form either the player or jackpot hands. Also, the set of symbols need not be limited to a traditional 52 playing card deck. Other embodiments utilising a different number of symbols are envisaged including the use of wild cards or jokers in addition to the 52 card deck and the removal of cards from the 52 card deck, such as the removal of the 'ten' cards in the game of pontoon.

The game controller **60** is shown in further detail in FIG. **6** and incorporates a processor **62** and memory **64**. The processor implements a number of modules including a random number generator **621**, an outcome generator **622**, an outcome evaluator **623** and a display controller **624**. The memory **64** includes a set of symbols **641** selected to form player and jackpot hands and, in the above described embodiment, the symbols **641** are a set of 52 playing card symbols. Also included in the memory **64** are the game rules **642**, for example the game rules for a game of poker, the game round prize data **642**A, meter data **643**, jackpot data **644** and hand data **645**. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that one or more of these modules could be provided in other ways, for example by a dedicated circuit.

In one embodiment, the outcome generator **622** includes a player hand former **622**B and a jackpot hand former **622**C, each of which employs a symbol selector **622**A to select a number of symbols specified by the game rules **642** from the set of symbols **641**. The symbol selector **622**A employs the random number generator **621** to randomly select symbols from the set **641** to form the player hand and the jackpot hand. The formed hands are stored as hand data **645**. For example, in one variation of the game of poker, the symbol selector selects symbols from the set of 52 playing card symbols to form a player hand including 5 cards. The symbol selector also selects symbols from another set of 52 playing card symbols to form a jackpot hand including 5 cards. The jackpot hand can be formed from a different set of 52 cards for each player in a multi-player embodiment. The symbol selector **622**A selects symbols from the symbol set **641** for display to the player on the display **54**, at a set of display positions, via the display controller **624**.

In one embodiment, the outcome evaluator **623** evaluates the symbols selected by the symbol selector **622**A to form the player and jackpot hands and determines whether to make a jackpot award to the player of the player hand corresponding to the jackpot hand. In a multi-player example, each player has a unique jackpot hand selected by the symbol selector **622**A and displayed only to the player. Alternatively, a common jackpot hand is used but is only visible to an individual player and is displayed on each player's display **54**. The common jackpot hand is used to determine whether to make a jackpot award to the player hand corresponding to the jackpot hand.

The outcome evaluator **623** also evaluates the player hand against other player hands in the multi-player embodiment or a simulated opponent hand or pay table in the case of a single player embodiment, according to the game rules **642**. For example, for the game of poker, the player is awarded a win, and a prize, if the player hand is ranked the highest according to a predetermined set of game rules **642** and the win or prize value corresponds to the amount bet by the or each player. In one embodiment, prize data **642**A contains a set of predetermined prizes to be awarded according to the combination of symbols forming the player hand. A person skilled in the art would appreciate that either one or both of these methods of awarding a prize may be performed by the outcome evaluator **623** in a game. The outcome evaluator **623** also updates meter data **643** and displays the prize on display **54** on the player interface **50**.

The amount bet, or wagered, is initially inputted by the player via the credit mechanism **52** and, in the game of poker, the player can continue to wager throughout the game round in accordance with the rules. In one embodiment, the player inputs a jackpot wager and a game round wager. A jackpot game is then conducted by the outcome evaluator **623** in response to the jackpot wager. An alternative example is envisaged where the jackpot game is conducted by the outcome evaluator **623** in response to a percentage of the game round wager. Also, in a further example, the jackpot wager and a percentage of the game round wager contribute to a progressive jackpot. The outcome evaluator **623** updates jackpot data **644** which contains the current value of the jackpot award to be made.

In one embodiment, the jackpot award is made to all players with a player hand corresponding to the jackpot hand. However, in a further embodiment, if more than one player has a player hand corresponding to the jackpot hand, the outcome evaluator **623** can be arranged to determine whether to make the jackpot award to only one player. An example of one method of achieving this is for the symbol selector **622**A to select cards randomly using the random number generator **621** for each player and the player's card, or cards, with the highest rank according to the rules of poker is the winner.

A method of gaming **700** is summarised in FIG. **7** and involves selecting **710** at least one symbol to form at least

one player hand including a plurality of symbols, selecting **720** at least one symbol to form a jackpot hand also including a plurality of symbols, and making **730** a jackpot award to the player if the player hand corresponds to the jackpot hand.

Persons skilled in the art will also appreciate that the method of the embodiment could be embodied in program code. The program code could be supplied in a number of ways, for example on a computer readable medium, such as a disc or a memory (for example, that could replace part of memory **103**) or as a data signal (for example, by downloading it from a server).

FIG. **8** shows a multi-player embodiment of a gaming system implementing a game. A gaming table **800** is arranged to include a number of gaming systems to enable a number of players to place a wager or bet in return for a game round of the game. In the illustrated embodiment, each player has a player interface, **50**A, **50**B, **50**C, **50**D, **50**E and **50**F, to enable the player to interact with the gaming system. For this purpose, each player interface has a display, **54**A, **54**B, **54**C, **54**D, **54**E and **54**F, and a game play mechanism **56**A, **56**B, **56**C, **56**D, **56**E and **56**F, to play the game. In one embodiment, each player is situated around a physical table and physically dealt a player hand and a jackpot hand displayed only to the respective players.

Each display **54**A, **54**B, **54**C, **54**D, **54**E and **54**F shown in FIG. **8** enables a selected player hand and a jackpot hand to be displayed to each respective player. For example, for a player using player interface **50**A to play a game round of poker, a jackpot hand is selected and displayed to the player on display **54**A, which is unique to the player. The player can then operate the game play mechanism **56**A to form a player hand by combining cards displayed on the display **54**A. The player can combine cards and place wagers depending on their perceived likelihood of forming the highest ranked combination of cards according to the game rules of poker. The player can also combine cards to form a player hand corresponding to the displayed unique jackpot hand to receive a jackpot award.

In one embodiment, the common display **810** displays information public to each player, and any observer, such as community cards, the amount of credit each player has left, the last winner of a game round and the amount of the win, the last winner of the jackpot and the amount of the jackpot award, and the current size of the jackpot.

A particular advantage of this embodiment is that because each player has their own jackpot hand, the triggering of a jackpot prize will not reveal anything about a player's hand to other players.

Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that other game rules of poker may be used to implement the above described gaming system. In such embodiments player hand former **622**B may be arranged to allow a player to re-form their hand in accordance with game rules which allow a player to discard and re-draw cards.

Example 1

In an example of a game to which the invention is applied, the symbol selector **622**A selects two cards to be player hole cards and five cards to be community cards for display to the player. The player hand is formed, using the player hand former **622**B, by combining at least one hole card and a number of community cards, for example to select the highest ranked hand. The jackpot hand former **622**C employs the symbol selector **622**A to select cards to form the jackpot hand. The player may operate the game play mechanism **56** to select the displayed cards using at least one of the hole cards and a number of the community cards to form the highest ranked combination of cards according to the game rules **642** or to form the jackpot hand. For example, the player operates the game play mechanism **56** to select two hole cards and three community cards from the displayed cards. The outcome evaluator **623** is arranged to evaluate the player hand against either a simulated opponent hand, or pay table, in a single player embodiment or against other player hands in a multi-player embodiment, to evaluate whether the combination of cards is ranked the highest.

The outcome evaluator **623** also evaluates the player hand against the jackpot hand to determine whether to make the jackpot award. The outcome evaluator **623** makes a larger portion of the jackpot award to the player hand corresponding to the jackpot hand formed with two hole cards than to the player hand corresponding to the jackpot hand formed with only one hole card. For example, if all five jackpot cards correspond to the five player cards formed with two hole cards and three community cards, a major jackpot award is made. If four of the five jackpot cards correspond to four of the five player cards formed with two hole cards and two community cards, a minor jackpot award is made. If four of the five jackpot cards correspond to four of the five player cards formed with one hole card and three community cards, a mini jackpot award is made. In the example, the game is multi-player Texas Hold 'Em including a game round and a jackpot game.

In the example, the rules of the game round of Texas Hold 'Em game specify that:

1. Players can bet from 1 to 100 credits per wager.
2. Maximum of 10 players per game.
3. Cards for the main game round are randomly selected from a 52 card deck.
4. Players place a wager then two hole cards are dealt to each player. The hole cards are only displayed to the player.
5. Players can place a further wager then three community cards are dealt and displayed to all players.
6. Players can place a further wager then one additional community card is dealt and displayed to all players.
7. A percentage of all moneys bet is put to the jackpot.

In the example, the rules of the jackpot game specify that:

1. Eligibility for the jackpot requires the player to wager a minimum of 5 credits on a game round.
2. The price for the jackpot wager is 5 credits.
3. The jackpot wager is placed at the commencement of the game.
4. When the game is commenced, a jackpot hand is selected for each player.
5. The jackpot hand is dealt randomly from a 52 card deck, separate to the deck used for the game round.
6. The jackpot hand can be unique to each player and drawn from one deck.
7. A jackpot award is made if the player's two hole cards and three of the community cards match the jackpot hand dealt to the player.

An example of the above game being played is as follows:

1. The player places a 5 credit wager for the game and a 5 credit wager for the jackpot (total wager=10 credits). A percentage of the wager is put into the jackpot.
2. The game round of poker commences.
3. From a 52 card game deck, the symbol selector **622**A randomly selects hole cards for all players. The hole cards are displayed on the display **54** by the display controller **624**.

4. From a separate 52 card jackpot deck, five random cards are selected by the symbol selector **622**A and displayed on each separate display **54** by the display controller **624** for each player.
5. The player places a second wager of 10 credits and a percentage of the wager is put into the jackpot.
6. From the remaining cards in the main game deck, three community cards are dealt and displayed to all players.
7. The player places a third wager of 2 credits. A percentage of the wager is put into the jackpot.
8. From the original deck, one community card is displayed to all players.
9. The player places a fourth wager of 10 credits. A percentage of the wager is put into the jackpot.
10. From the original deck, one community card is dealt and displayed to all players.
11. The cards are evaluated by the outcome evaluator **623** for the main game.
12. The cards are evaluated by the outcome evaluator **623** for the jackpot game.
13. The jackpot award is made to the player with the corresponding jackpot hand.

It will be understood to persons skilled in the art of the invention that many modifications may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, in particular it will be apparent that certain features of the invention can be combined to form further embodiments.

It is to be understood that, the reference to prior art herein does not constitute an admission that the prior art forms a part of the common general knowledge in any country.

In the claims which follow and in the preceding description of the invention, except where the context indicates otherwise due to express language or necessary implication, the word "comprise" or variations such as "comprises" or "comprising" is used in an inclusive sense, i.e. to specify the presence of the stated features but not to preclude the presence or addition of further features in various embodiments of the invention.

It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that numerous variations and/or modifications may be made to the invention as shown in the specific embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as broadly described. The present embodiments are, therefore, to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive. Several embodiments are described above with reference to the drawings. These drawings illustrate certain details of specific embodiments that implement the systems and methods and programs of the present invention. However, describing the invention with drawings should not be construed as imposing on the invention any limitations associated with features shown in the drawings. It will be understood that the invention disclosed and defined in this specification extends to all alternative combinations of two or more of the individual features mentioned or evident from the text or drawings. All of these different combinations constitute various alternative aspects of the invention.

The present invention contemplates methods, systems and program products on any electronic device and/or machine-readable media suitable for accomplishing its operations. Certain embodiments of the present invention may be implemented using an existing computer processor and/or by a special purpose computer processor incorporated for this or another purpose or by a hardwired system, for example.

Embodiments within the scope of the present invention include program products comprising machine-readable media for carrying or having machine-executable instructions or data structures stored thereon. Such machine-readable media can be any available media that can be accessed by a general purpose or special purpose computer or other machine with a processor. By way of example, such machine-readable media may comprise RAM, ROM, PROM, EPROM, EEPROM, Flash, CD-ROM or other optical disk storage, magnetic disk storage or other magnetic storage devices, or any other medium which can be used to carry or store desired program code in the form of machine-executable instructions or data structures and which can be accessed by a general purpose or special purpose computer or other machine with a processor. When information is transferred or provided over a network or another communications connection (either hardwired, wireless, or a combination of hardwired or wireless) to a machine, the machine properly views the connection as a machine-readable medium. Thus, any such a connection is properly termed a machine-readable medium. Combinations of the above are also included within the scope of machine-readable media. Machine-executable instructions comprise, for example, instructions and data which cause a general purpose computer, special purpose computer, or special purpose processing machines to perform a certain function or group of functions.

The invention claimed is:

1. A method of conducting a game, said method comprising:

establishing a first credit balance associated with a first monetary value at a first gaming machine and a second credit balance associated with a second monetary value at a second gaming machine using at least one of a coin input chute, a bill collector, and a card reader associated with each of the first and second gaming machines;

receiving a first wager at the first gaming machine and a second wager at the second gaming machine for a base game, the first wager decreasing the first credit balance and the second wager decreasing the second credit balance;

allocating, by a processor, for play of the base game, a first base hand to a first player and a second base hand to a second player, wherein the first and second base hands include respective non-overlapping pluralities of symbols selected from a set of symbols;

allocating, by the processor, for play of a jackpot game, a first jackpot hand to the first player and a second jackpot hand to the second player, wherein the first and second jackpot hands include respective pluralities of symbols selected from the set of symbols;

awarding, using the processor, a jackpot prize in the jackpot game in response to the first base hand matching the first jackpot hand, the jackpot prize awarded irrespective of an outcome of the base game, wherein when the second base hand also matches the second jackpot hand, respective pluralities of additional symbols are randomly selected for the first and second players, and the jackpot prize is awarded to the first player when the first player has the plurality of additional symbols with the highest rank according to at least one predefined criterion; and

increasing, at the first gaming machine, the first credit balance according to the jackpot prize.

2. A method of gaming as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the set of symbols correspond to cards in a game round of poker and the set of symbols comprises playing card symbols.

3. A method of gaming as claimed in claim **2**, wherein the playing card symbols forming the first and second base hands are selected from one set of 52 playing card symbols

and the symbols forming the first and second jackpot hands are selected from another set of the same 52 playing card symbols.

4. A method of gaming as claimed in claim **2**, wherein five cards form each of the first and second base hands and the first and second jackpot hands.

5. A method of gaming as claimed in claim **2**, further comprising:

conducting the jackpot game in response to the first player placing a jackpot wager, the jackpot wager decreasing the first credit balance.

6. A method of gaming as claimed in claim **5**, wherein the jackpot wager and a percentage of the first wager contribute to a progressive jackpot.

7. A method of gaming as claimed in claim **2**, further comprising:

conducting the jackpot game in response to a percentage of the first wager.

8. A method of gaming as claimed in claim **2**, wherein the game round of poker comprises:

selecting two cards to be player hole cards;

selecting five cards to be community cards; and

forming each of the first and second base hands by combining at least one player hole card and a number of community cards.

9. A method of gaming as claimed in claim **8**, wherein a larger portion of the jackpot award is made to the first player when the first base hand matches the first jackpot hand and the first base hand is formed with two player hole cards than a portion of the jackpot award made to a second player when the second base hand also matches the second jackpot hand and the second base hand is formed with one player hole card.

10. A method of gaming as claimed in claim **1**, further comprising conducting a decider round to make the jackpot award to one of the first and second players when the first base hand matches the first jackpot hand and the second base hand also matches the second jackpot hand.

11. A game controller comprising:

a processor configured to:

establish a first credit balance associated with a first monetary value at a first gaming machine and a second credit balance associated with a second monetary value at a second gaming machine using at least one of a coin input chute, a bill collector, and a card reader associated with each of the first and gaming machines;

receive a first wager at the first gaming machine and a second wager at the second gaming machine for a base game, the first wager decreasing the first credit balance and the second wager decreasing the second credit balance; and

execute instructions to implement:

a symbol selector configured to:

allocate, for play of the base game, a first base hand to a first player and a second base hand to a second player, wherein the first and second base hands include respective non-overlapping pluralities of symbols selected from a set of symbols; and

allocate, for play of a jackpot game, a first jackpot hand to the first player and a second jackpot hand to the second player, wherein the first and second jackpot hands include respective pluralities of symbols selected from the set of symbols; and

an outcome evaluator configured to determine whether to award a jackpot prize in the jackpot game in response to the first base hand matching the first jackpot hand, the jackpot prize awarded irrespective of an outcome of the base game, and wherein when the second base hand also matches the second jackpot hand, respective pluralities of additional symbols are randomly selected for the first and second players, and the jackpot prize is awarded to the first player when the first player has the plurality of additional symbols with a highest rank according to at least one predefined criterion,

wherein the processor is further configured to increase the first credit balance at the first gaming machine according to the jackpot prize.

12. A game controller as claimed in claim **11**, wherein the symbol selector is further configured to select symbols to be displayed in a set of display positions of at least one of the first and second gaming machines.

13. A game controller as claimed in claim **11**, wherein the set of symbols correspond to cards in a game round of poker and the set of symbols comprises playing card symbols.

14. A game controller as claimed in claim **13**, wherein the processor is further configured to receive a jackpot wager at the first gaming machine to be bet in the jackpot game, the jackpot wager decreasing the first credit balance.

15. A game controller as claimed in claim **14**, wherein the outcome evaluator is further configured to conduct the game round of poker and to determine whether to award the jackpot prize to the first player based on the jackpot wager.

16. A game controller as claimed in claim **14**, wherein the outcome evaluator is further configured to conduct the game round of poker and to determine whether to award the jackpot prize to the first player based on a percentage of the first wager.

17. A game controller as claimed in claim **13**, wherein the game round of poker comprises:

selecting two cards to be player hole cards;

selecting five cards to be community cards; and

forming each of the first and second base hands by combining at least one player hole card and a number of community cards.

18. A game controller as claimed in claim **17**, wherein the outcome evaluator is further configured to award a larger portion of the jackpot prize to the first player when the first base hand matches the first jackpot hand and the first base hand is formed with two player hole cards than a portion of the jackpot award made to the second player when the second base hand matches the second jackpot hand and the second based hand is formed with one hole card.

19. A game controller as claimed in claim **11**, wherein the outcome evaluator is further configured to conduct a decider round to award the jackpot prize to one player of the first and second players when the first base hand matches the first jackpot hand and the second base hand also matches the second jackpot hand.

20. A gaming system comprising:

a display configured to display a plurality of symbols in a set of display positions to a player;

a credit mechanism including at least one of a coin input chute, a bill collector, and a card reader;

a processor configured to:

establish a first credit balance associated with a first monetary value using the credit mechanism;

receive a first wager for a base game, the first wager decreasing the first credit balance; and

execute instructions to implement:

a symbol selector configured to:

allocate, for play of the base game, a first base hand to a first player, the first base hand including a plurality of symbols selected from a set of symbols, wherein a second base hand allocated to a

second player at a second gaming system includes a respective plurality of symbols selected from the set of symbols, the first and second base hands non-overlapping; and

allocate, for play of a jackpot game, a first jackpot hand to the first player, the first jackpot hand including a plurality of symbols selected from the set of symbols, wherein a second jackpot hand allocated to the second player includes a respective plurality of symbols selected from the set of symbols; and

an outcome evaluator configured to determine whether to award a jackpot prize in the jackpot game in response to the first base hand matching the first jackpot hand, the jackpot prize awarded irrespective of an outcome of the base game, and wherein when the second base hand also matches the second jackpot hand, respective pluralities of additional symbols are randomly selected for each player of the first and second players, and the jackpot prize is awarded to the first player when the first player has the plurality of additional symbols with a highest rank according to at least one predefined criterion,

wherein the processor is further configured to increase the first credit balance according to the jackpot prize.

21. A gaming system as claimed in claim **20**, wherein the set of symbols correspond to cards in a game round of poker and the set of symbols comprises playing card symbols.

22. A gaming system as claimed in claim **21**, wherein the symbol selector is further configured to:

select playing card symbols forming the first base hand from one set of 52 playing card symbols; and

select playing card symbols forming the first jackpot hand from another set of the same 52 playing card symbols.

23. A gaming system as claimed in claim **22**, wherein five cards form each of the first base hand and the first jackpot hand.

24. A gaming system as claimed in claim **21**, wherein the symbol selector is further configured to:

select two cards to form player hole cards;

select five cards to form community cards; and

form the first base hand from at least one player hole card and a number of community cards.

25. A gaming system as claimed in claim **24**, wherein the outcome evaluator is further configured to determine whether to award a larger portion of the jackpot prize to the first player when the first base hand matches the first jackpot hand and the first base hand is formed with two player hole cards than a portion of the jackpot prize to a second player when the second base hand also matches the second jackpot hand and the second base hand is formed with one player hole card.

26. A gaming system as claimed in claim **21**, wherein the processor is further configured to receive a jackpot wager to be bet in the jackpot game, the jackpot wager decreasing the first credit balance.

27. A gaming system as claimed in claim **26**, wherein the outcome evaluator is further configured to determine whether to award the jackpot prize to the first player based on the jackpot wager.

28. A gaming system as claimed in claim **26**, wherein the outcome evaluator is further configured to award the jackpot prize to the first player based on a percentage of the first wager.

29. A gaming system as claimed in claim **26**, wherein the jackpot wager and a percentage of the first wager contribute to a progressive jackpot.

30. A gaming system comprising:

a player interface comprising a game play mechanism mounted to a cabinet and a display mounted within the cabinet, a credit mechanism comprising at least one of a coin input chute, a bill collector, and a card reader, and a game controller disposed within the cabinet comprising a processor and a memory storing game control instructions that enable the game controller to operate in response to operation of the game play mechanism by the player, the processor configured to:

establish a first credit balance associated with a first monetary value using the credit mechanism;

receive a first wager for a base game, the first wager decreasing the first credit balance; and

execute the game control instructions to implement:

a symbol selector configured to:

allocate, for play of the base game, a first base hand to a first player, the first base hand including a plurality of symbols selected from a set of symbols, wherein a second base hand allocated to a second player at a second gaming system includes a respective plurality of symbols selected from the set of symbols, the first and second base hands non-overlapping; and

allocate, for play of a jackpot game, a first jackpot hand to the first player, the first jackpot hand including a plurality of symbols selected from the set of symbols, wherein a second jackpot hand allocated to the second player includes a respective plurality of symbols selected from the set of symbols; and

an outcome evaluator configured to determine whether to award a jackpot prize in the jackpot game in response to the first base hand matching the first jackpot hand, the jackpot prize awarded irrespective of an outcome of the base game, and wherein when the second base hand also matches the second jackpot hand, respective pluralities of additional symbols are randomly selected for each player of the first and second players, and the jackpot prize is awarded to the first player when the first player has the plurality of additional symbols with a highest rank according to at least one predefined criterion,

wherein the processor is further configured to increase the first credit balance according to the jackpot prize.

31. A computer readable storage medium having computer-executable instructions embodied thereon, wherein the computer-executable instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

establish a first credit balance associated with a first monetary value at a first gaming machine and a second credit balance associated with a second monetary value at a second gaming machine using at least one of a coin input chute, a bill collector, and a card reader associated with each of the first and second gaming machines;

receive a first wager at the first gaming machine and a second wager at the second gaming machine for a base game, the first wager decreasing the first credit balance and the second wager decreasing the second credit balance;

allocate, for play of the base game, a first base hand to a first player and a second base hand to a second player, wherein the first and second base hands include respective non-overlapping pluralities of symbols selected from a set of symbols;

allocate, for play of a jackpot game, a first jackpot hand to the first player and a second jackpot hand to the

second player, wherein the first and second jackpot hands include respective pluralities of symbols selected from the set of symbols;

award a jackpot prize in the jackpot game in response to the first base hand matching the first jackpot hand, the jackpot prize awarded irrespective of an outcome of the base game, and wherein when the second base hand also matches the second jackpot hand, respective pluralities of additional symbols are randomly selected for each of the first and second players, and the jackpot prize is awarded to the first player when the first player has the respective plurality of additional symbols with a highest rank according to at least one predefined criterion; and

increase, at the first gaming machine, the first credit balance according to the jackpot prize.

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